



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

One or two of the words in these examples may appear somewhat strange to the ordinary Welsh reader; but they are not, therefore, the less genuine. They are, in fact, pure Welsh words in ancient use, and, for that very reason, strictly appropriate to the occasion, on which they are here employed. Without farther comment I leave this curious *excerptum* in the hands of your readers, such of whom, as are Welshmen, will, no doubt, hail, with transport, this new testimony to the primitiveness of their vernacular language. Nor, let any one exclaim, in the words of the Roman poet,

*Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic incredulus odi.*

CELTA.

---

## THE MISCELLANIST.—No. XVI.

---

### I. ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CAMBRO-BRITON.

MR. EDITOR,—In the leading article of your last Number there are some observations to which I cannot altogether subscribe. With every thing said respecting the Antiquity of the Welsh tongue I perfectly agree, and feel obliged to the author for his able discussion of the subject. But my opinion differs from his with respect to the origin of language. In the disputes on this point I cannot say that I am at all versed: the arguments that have been adduced by the learned on both sides of the question I am not acquainted with. You will perhaps, therefore, consider me incompetent to say much on the subject; however, I trust you will excuse me for mentioning one plain argument, which appears to me rather strong against the supposition, that language, at first, was not the gift of God. It is not an argument, that depends at all on any thing in the Scriptures, (for I can see nothing in them decisive one way or the other,) nor on any ancient records, but rests on what seems to me to be the very nature of things. That language was at first communicated to man by the Almighty I can no more doubt, than that the substance of his food and the materials of his raiment were provided for him. There is nothing new, says the Preacher, under the sun; there is nothing in this world,

which is *materially* or *essentially* new. A new form may be given to things, but their substance is not new ; so, with respect to language, man may give it an endless variety of forms, but its substance, its elements, must, as I conceive, have proceeded first from Him who is the creator of all things. Man originates or gives real being to nothing ; what he does is to appropriate materials to different purposes by various modes of combination. All the inventions of art and all the discoveries of science are to be considered in this light. Reasoning by analogy, I am led to think that language, being a thing *sui generis*, essentially distinct from every other gift or qualification bestowed on man, could not have been a human invention, but must have been at first communicated : but, having received the materials, the simple and primary elements of speech, as many as at first were necessary, man was capable afterwards of increasing these materials by different modifications.

Countenanced, I think, is this view by what is recorded of the confusion of languages. There would have been, as it appears, no variety of tongues, had there been no divine interposition ; and, if this did not otherwise take place, is it too much to suppose that the first tongue had God as its author ? What appears the most obvious view of the subject, is this :— God first endued man with a language, a perfect speech, sufficient for all his purposes, adapted to his capacities and situation, to the nature and state of things, to the world in which he lived. This language increased in proportion to the new discoveries of mankind, until the time that it was multiplied by God, at Babel, into many languages ; and probably most of them, as I have seen it suggested before now in the CAMBRO-BRITON, partook in a measure, more or less, of the original language, whose first author, in my view, was God.

To the authorities, produced on this subject in the Essay, the French author and Dr. Priestley, I can allow no very great weight. Of the former I know nothing, only that he belongs to a nation not very remarkable for its allegiance to the Supreme Being\* ; but the character of the latter is, in some degree,

\* We can give our correspondent full credit for the assertion that “he knows nothing” of the French author alluded to, (M. de Gebelin,) whose luminous views of the origin and progress of language are far from meriting the reproach, which, with too much justice, belongs to the works

known to me; the tenour of his religious sentiments was clearly to divest the Deity of his prerogatives, and to appropriate them to man. The exaltation of the creature at the expense of the Creator seems to have been the prime object and character of his whole creed; and this trait in his sentiments runs through all his speculations that refer at all to the transactions of the Almighty with his creatures.

*December 11th, 1821.*

DEWI.

## II. WELSH SOCIETIES—BARDIC MOTTO IN POWYS\*.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CAMBRO-BRITON.

SIR,—Often has my mind been dilated with the extatic contemplation of the different measures that have of late years conspired, not only to restore, but to enhance, the excellent knowledge of British Literature; from the STAR which arose in the South, the VENDOCIAN LUMINARY of the North, and, above all, to that valuable miscellany of the Metropolis, the CAMBRO-BRITON. The former have been useful to rouse the plebeian part of the Principality, while the latter has been more successful in kindling the zeal of the higher classes of the community. This sacred spark of patriotism lay dormant, as it were, for a considerable number of years; or, at least, it was concentrated within the circle of a few Briton-like lovers of their national lore, residing chiefly in London, except a few dispersed individuals, who still adhered to their native soil, who only occasionally visited those their congenereous brethren in the city, the society of whom served to ignite the noble spark, and they returned to their respective stations with fresh ardour for the pursuit of their former explorations. At length, however, this zeal matured into more strength, and was communicated to new objects, until new and vigorous achievements were contemplated—societies formed for the ac-

of some of his countrymen. Yet, even if this stigma had been much more generally deserved than it really is, it ought not, in candour, to have been thus loosely converted into a matter of accusation against the writer in question.—ED.

\* These observations, it seems, have already been printed for distribution amongst the author's friends, and we gladly comply with his wish to give them the advantage of a more general circulation.—ED.

VOL. III.

A A